

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SUVA 01397 080439Z
ACTION EB-08

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, FJ
SUBJECT: FIJI'S SUGAR QUOTA

1. FIJI MINISTRY OF INFORMATION HAS DISTRIBUTED HIGHLIGHTS OF SPEECH MADE BY AGRICULTURE MINISTER WALKER IN JULY 26 LONDON MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL SUGAR ORGANISATION SPECIAL HARDSHIP COMMITTEE. SPEECH PRESENTS FIJI'S CASE FOR ADDITIONAL 40,000 METRIC TONS OF SUGAR RAW VALUE (MTRV) ABOVE PRESENT QUOTA OF 101,875 MTRV. REASONS WHICH WALKER USED FOR REQUESTED INCREASE INCLUDE INFORMATION OF POSSIBLE INTEREST TO ADDRESSEES.

2. ACCORDING TO WALKER, SUGAR INDUSTRY IS LARGEST EMPLOYER IN FIJI WITH 18,000 FARMERS WHO WORK SMALL PLOTS (AVERAGE FOUR HECTARES) HOLDING CANE CONTRACTS. "IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ONE QUARTER OF THE ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION DRAWS ITS INCOME DIRECTLY FROM THE INDUSTRY, AND OF COURSE MANY MORE ARE INDIRECTLY DEPENDENT ON IT," SAID WALKER. OVER 90 PERCENT OF PRODUCTION IS FOR EXPORT; HOME CONSUMPTION IS LIMITED BECAUSE OF SMALL POPULATION. SUGAR HAS DURING PAST THREE YEARS REPRESENTED 80.9 PERCENT OF FIJI'S EXPORTS, THE NEXT MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE EXPORT ITEM BEING COCONUT OIL WHICH CONTRIBUTED 7.2 PERCENT. LAST YEAR'S SUGAR CROP REPRESENTED 33.8 PERCENT

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PAGE 02 SUVA 01397 080439Z

OF THE COUNTRY'S GNP.

3. DESPITE DROUGHTS IN 1977 AND EARLY 1978, PRODUCTION HAS NOT DROPPED, AND FIJI PRESENTLY HOLDS 58,041 MTRV IN STOCK WHICH PRESENTS STORAGE PROBLEMS. NEW STORAGE FACILITIES IN LAUTOKA ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION BUT WILL NOT BE COMPLETED BEFORE MID-1979. MEANWHILE,

PRODUCTION FOR THE 1978 SEASON IS ESTIMATED AT 323,541
PTRV AND THE ANTUCIPATED CROP IN 1979 IS 30,000 TO
390,000 MTRV.

4. NOTE: FIJI TIMES ANNOUNCED AUG 2 THAT FIJI'S QUOTA
HAD BEEN INCREASED BY 25,000 MTRV.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Event:
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